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The 1024785 people who reported four or less grades of schooling in the 1961 Canadian Census point up the paradox of a society where free compulsory education to age 16 is assumed to mean everyone will at least complete elementary school. To understand these people as individuals, all available census data on these educationally deficient adults were compiled, showing that approximately 10% of the total were aged 15-29; 18,022 served in managerial, professional, and technical occupations; 10,649 earned over \$5,000 in 1961; 13 were women; 216,109 men were not in the labor force; about 10% of Canadian children lived in families where the household head was one of the 1024785; recent increases in opportunities still have not adequately reached 43.6% of the Indians and 90% of the Eskimos; and 25.8% were not born in Canada. Public libraries in Canada should furnish reading material for these adults, with suggestions from adult education leaders. (Six pages of tables and statistics are presented. This document is also available from the Canadian Association for Adult Education, Corbett House, 21 Sultan St., Toronto 5, Canada, \$50). (f)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

MEASURING THE NEED
FOR ADULT BASIC EDUCATION

Edith Adamson

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The topic of this paper was assigned on the basis of several assumptions, the validity of which may be open to question. The paper was originally delivered to the Seminar on Adult Basic Education in March 1966.

The assumptions are:

- 1. Education is a good thing. The more of it an individual has, the better for him and society.*
- 2. The individual needs the equivalent of at least four years elementary schooling in order to benefit from vocational training and to function effectively as a member of the labour force, his family, and as a citizen in a democratic society. (UNESCO) Basic education meets this need.*
- 3. Education equals schooling. This is drawn from the report of individuals in the Census of 1961.*

The education questions on the 1961 Census asked the respondent to state the highest grade or year of schooling ever attended. The answers fall into the following categories: no schooling, Kindergarten, Elementary grades 1-4, Elementary grade 5 plus, and so on. Information on all those persons 15 years of age and over, not attending school at the time of the Census, was compiled for the first three categories—those who reported no schooling, those who reported Kindergarten only and those who reported 1-4 years of elementary schooling only.

In 1961 there were 1,024,785 of these persons, young people and adults, who reported no schooling or no more than four grades of elementary schooling. This was the figure which reached the headlines in December 1965 as "one million illiterates" at the time of the conference on Poverty in Ottawa. This phrase is misleading for several reasons. These individuals gave a simple answer to a simple question on level of schooling. They did not fail a literary test since none was administered. No question was asked about out-of-school education, self-directed or otherwise. Although the use of the term "illiterates"

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is deplorable, the headline writers were simply making the same assumptions as were made at the beginning of this paper, and should be credited with drawing attention to a paradox in our society, where free compulsory education to age 16 is assumed to mean at least the completion of elementary schooling for all.

In the past two weeks I have compiled all the available Census data on these persons with a maximum of four years schooling who constituted 9.3 per cent of the population 15 years of age and over, not at school. This additional information, statistical though it is, may help us to see them as individuals with varied characteristics and backgrounds, achievements and needs.

First of all, sketches of two typical Canadians, who reported no more than 4 years of schooling. The man (and slightly more than half were men) was 55 years of age, born in Canada, and lived in a centre of 1,000 population or over. If English-speaking, he lived in Ontario; French-speaking, he lived in Quebec. He earned an average of \$2,389 a year and probably worked in a construction trade. Although specific data on housing, marital status and children were not available, it is probable that he was married to someone with similar schooling and had three children, who did not continue in school, beyond the age of compulsory schooling.

The typical woman with limited education was 54 years of age, lived in a centre of 1,000 population or larger, was English-speaking in Ontario, or French-speaking in Quebec, and was Canadian born. She was not a member of the labour force, and had no income of her own. She was probably married to someone with similar schooling, and had three children who did not attend school beyond the age of compulsory education.

However, since I am inclined to agree with the sage who said "all generalizations are false, including this one," I found myself fascinated by some of the atypical characteristics revealed in the statistics on those with limited education. Galbraith pointed out, in **The Affluent Society**, that averages tend to decrease visibility, and help to conceal the extremes of poverty and wealth. Thus the averages used in the illustrations above tend to create stereotypes which conceal the rich variety possible in individuals. Since you are concerned with individuals at the point of teaching, you may be interested in some of the facts about less average persons with limited schooling. A few observations:

1. There were 109,800 persons 15 to 29 years of age not at school with no more than 4 years of schooling in 1961, according to the Census. As far as can be ascertained, no public funds were spent on the education of these young people in that year. There were

114,672 full-time university students in Canada in 1961 and the taxpayers spent, through various levels of government, a total of more than 200 million dollars on university education in that year, or over \$1,800 per full-time student.

2. There were 18,022 persons with no more than four years schooling engaged in managerial, professional and technical occupations. The majority were managers and owners of manufacturing, construction, wholesale, retail, and personal service industries, and a few were religious workers, artists, teachers, etc., reporting schooling at this level.
3. Although the average annual wage and salary income of non-farm wage-earners with no more than four years of schooling was \$2,389 for men and \$1,268 for women, there were 10,649 persons with this schooling who reported earnings of more than \$5,000 in 1961.
4. More than one-third of the total population 15 years and over with four years or less of schooling, (367,550) were women not in the labour force. Forty-eight percent of these were between 15 and 54 years of age and were probably housewives caring for children. The implications of this are probably familiar to you. There have been numerous studies of underprivileged children which demonstrated positive correlations between the level of schooling of mothers and the educational aspirations and achievements of their children.

The other 52 percent of these women, who were 55 years of age or older, were unlikely to enter the labour force, and many could expect to exist for another 15 or 20 years on welfare or old age assistance.

At the same time the Census data revealed 216,109 men, not in the labour force, with no schooling or four years or less. Seventy-three percent of these men were 55 years of age or over, and many of them could look forward only to the same bleak existence as women of the same education level.

These people are apt to be lost sight of in our current concern with education as a factor in economic development, and the need to upgrade the educational qualifications of the labour force. Yet their educational needs, to assist them to achieve more satisfying personal lives and to participate more fully in society as citizens, should be kept in mind.

5. A total of 1,689,636 persons lived in families, of which the head had no schooling or grades 1-4 only. There were 667,918 children and young people in these families, representing 9.5 percent of all dependent children in families in Canada, or almost one in 10. The families contained an average of 4.1 persons each, compared

with an average of 3.9 for all families. In families for whom wage earnings were reported, those with no schooling or grades 1-4 only earned \$3,318 per family during the year, compared with an average of \$4,985 for all families. Wage earning data does not take into account those families who subsisted on unemployment insurance, relief, or other non-wage payments, or the self-employed.

6. Canadian-born Indians and Eskimos, 15 years of age and over with no schooling or grades 1-4, represented only 5 percent of our total group, numbering 53,873. Yet their plight has been more visible, partly because they live in more concentrated groupings than many others with limited education, and partly because their educational opportunities have been much more limited than those of other Canadians.

When we compare Canadian-born Indians with the total population, by education level, we find that 43.6 percent of Indians 15 years of age and over had no schooling or elementary grades 1-4 only, compared with 8.6 percent in the total population. More than 90 percent of Eskimos 15 years of age and over have no schooling, or elementary grades 1-4 only. The increase in opportunities for Indians and Eskimos in recent years have concentrated on bringing their young people into the educational mainstream. Education opportunities extended to adults, which show respect for the cultural heritage of the native peoples of Canada, will help to raise the economic standard of living and enrich our entire culture.

7. The non-Canadian born, 15 years of age and over with no schooling or 1-4 grades, numbered 256,643 or 25.8 percent of the total. This does not include the 40,580 non-Canadian born persons of British (Isles) and French origin, who probably arrived in Canada without a language handicap.

Almost 63 percent of all non-Canadians born with this level of schooling immigrated before 1931, and just 28.9 percent arrived between 1951 and 1961. Those providing adult basic education for the foreign-born may wish to compare data on their students by period of immigration to measure the extent to which needs are being met.

Before I close I would like to say a word about a subject which is dear to my heart—the role of the library in adult basic education. Public libraries should provide supplementary reading materials, of adult interest, appropriately written, to give the adult, who is beginning to read, practice and encouragement. This is a new area for libraries in Canada, of which they are just becoming aware. You can

help them to serve this need by approaching them directly. Ask the librarian of your local public library to set up a display of suitable materials for your class, so that you may take them to the library for a visit.

Give the librarian plenty of notice, because the chances are the books will have to be bought. You may even have to point out to her that a list of such materials, prepared by the Reading Improvement for Adults Committee of the American Library Association, was published in the September 1965 issue of *Wilson Library Bulletin*. The Committee, of which I am a member, is running a workshop on July 8th and 9th in New York City, before the A.L.A. annual conference, to evaluate more material. Similarly, the Canadian Library Association is meeting in Calgary at their annual conference in June to discuss the role of libraries in this field, and will be addressed by David Woodsworth of the Canada Welfare Council. Anyway, keep in touch with your public librarian—you can help each other to meet the needs of adults with limited education.

To sum up, what shall we do with these assorted facts and figures? The main purpose in bringing them together was to provide you, who are already aware of needs in the field of adult basic education, with more information on the characteristics of those with whom you work, and the overall dimensions of the field.

It is hoped that they will be useful to you in impressing others with the needs. I suggest that you regard the statistics as merely indicators of needs and continue to see the field as one of challenge to educators and librarians to provide opportunities for adults of limited education. In closing, I would like to cite a poem which may help to restore our perspective on the need of the individual:

THE UNKNOWN CITIZEN

by

W. H. Auden

*He was found by the Bureau of Statistics to be
One against whom there was no official complaint,
And all the reports on his conduct agree
That, in the modern sense of an old-fashioned word, he was a
saint,
For in everything he did he served the Greater Community.
Except for the War till the day he retired
He worked in a factory and never got fired,
But satisfied his employers, Fudge Motors Inc.
Yet he wasn't a scab or odd in his views,
For his Union reports that he paid his dues,*

*(Our report on his Union shows it was sound)
 And our Social Psychology workers found
 That he was popular with his mates and liked a drink.
 The Press are convinced that he bought a paper every day
 And that his reactions to advertisements were normal in every way.
 Policies taken out in his name prove that he was fully insured,
 And his Health-card shows that he was once in the hospital but
 left it cured.
 Both Producers Research and High-Grade Living declare
 He was fully sensible to the advantages of the Instalment Plan
 And had everything necessary to the Modern Man,
 A phonograph, a radio, a car and a frigidaire.
 Our researchers into Public Opinion are content
 That he held the proper opinions for the time of the year;
 When there was peace, he was for peace; when there was war,
 he went.
 He was married and added five children to the population,
 Which our Eugenist says was the right number for a parent of his
 generation,
 And our teachers report that he never interfered with their
 education.
 Was he free? Was he happy? The question is absurd:
 Had anything been wrong, we should certainly have heard.*



**Characteristics of Persons 15 years of age and over not attending school,
Census 1961 who reported no schooling or 1-4 grades only**

		Number	Percent
Sex			
Total	1,024,785		
Men		574,408	56.1
Women		450,377	43.9
Age			
Total	1,024,785		
15-19		26,284	2.6
20-24		35,864	3.5
25-29		47,652	4.6
30-34		61,340	6.0
35-39		78,014	7.6
40-44		78,654	7.7
45-49		88,763	8.7
50-54		99,925	9.9
55-59		104,954	10.2
60-64		101,338	9.8
65-69		95,043	9.3
70 and over		206,954	20.2
Rural-Urban			
Total	1,024,785		
Urban		576,889	56.3
Rural farm		142,804	
Rural non-farm		305,092	
Total		447,896	43.7
Province		Number	Percent
Newfoundland		57,610	5.6
Prince Edward Island		4,390	0.4
Nova Scotia		34,925	3.4
New Brunswick		44,549	4.3
Quebec		399,074	38.9
Ontario		239,097	23.3
Manitoba		61,875	6.0
Saskatchewan		59,682	5.8
Alberta		58,032	5.7
British Columbia		58,626	5.7
Yukon		877	0.1
Northwest Territories		6,048	0.6

	Total	Men	Women	%
Labour Force¹				
¹ Includes persons in school and working part-time, as well as those not at school. Excludes self-employed, unpaid family workers, inmates of institutions.				
Total with less than 5 years elementary education	398,884	334,508	64,376	38.9 of total labour force
				100.0
Managerial, professional and technical occupations (managers and owners manu- facturing, construction, wholesale, retail, com- munity, busi- ness and per- sonal service industries, nurses, clergy, artists, etc.)	18,022	15,378	2,644	4.5
Clerical occupa- tions (shipping and receiving clerks, etc.)	5,367	3,945	1,422	1.3
Sales clerks, etc.	6,188	4,165	2,023	1.6
Service and recreation (guards, watch- men, cooks, waiters, kitchen helpers, bar- bers, laun- derers, jani- tors, etc.)	56,734	28,398	28,336	14.2

	Total	Men	Women	%
Transportation and communi- cations	20,516	20,292	224	5.2
(taxi drivers, driver-sales- men, truck drivers, etc.)				
Farmers and farm workers ..	83,090	74,224	8,866	20.8
(gardeners, etc.)				
Loggers, etc.	18,875	18,859	16	4.7
Fishermen, trappers and hunters	12,035	11,966	69	3.0
Miners, etc.	7,061	7,059	2	1.8
Craftsmen	111,103	94,682	16,421	27.9
(tailors, car- penters and other con- struction workers, paper makers, metalworkers, plumbers, mechanics, painters, equip- ment operators, longshoremen, etc.)				
Labourers	47,865	45,821	2,044	12.0
(manufacturing, wood and paper industries, pri- mary metal in- dustries, con- struction, trans- portation, utili- ties, trade, public admini- stration, etc.)				
Occupation not stated	12,028	9,719	2,309	3.0

Labour Force

with stated wage and salary income

		Men	Women
Canada:	number	227,047	43,761
	average income	\$ 2,389	\$ 1,268
15-19		\$ 946	\$ 901
20-24		\$ 1,667	\$ 1,215
25-34		\$ 2,254	\$ 1,306
35-44		\$ 2,556	\$ 1,344
45-54		\$ 2,557	\$ 1,323
55-64		\$ 2,549	\$ 1,257
65 and over		\$ 1,965	\$ 1,043

	Total	Men	Women	%
Persons not in the labour force with no schooling or				
1-4 years	583,659	216,109	367,550	100.0
15-19	18,006	9,449	8,557	3.0
20-24	16,735	5,474	11,261	2.9
25-34	48,188	11,283	36,905	8.3
35-44	69,826	13,920	55,906	12.0
45-54	81,887	17,963	63,924	14.0
55-64	104,495	30,016	74,479	17.9
65 and over	244,522	128,004	116,518	41.9

Family Data	Number	%
Total number of family heads	4,147,444	100.0
Family heads with no schooling or 1-4 grades only	408,739	9.9
Family heads with university degree ..	193,795	4.7

Percent of Children at School	15-18 years	19-24 years
All family heads	70.6	20.0
Family heads with no schooling	45.5	6.9
Family heads with 1-4 grades only	51.8	8.5

Dependent Children	Number	%
Total number of children under 24 years of age living at home	7,777,137	100.0
Children under 24 years of age living at home in families whose heads have no schooling	101,806	1.3
Children under 24 years of age living at home in families whose heads have 1-4 grades only	733,930	9.4
Total children under 24 years of age living at home in families whose heads have no schooling or 1-4 grades only	835,736	10.7

Canadian-born Indians and Eskimos

Indians 15 years of age and over (Includes some attending school)

Years of age	Total	Schooling				
		none	Elementary 1-4	5+	Secondary	University
15-34	61,390	6,389	11,354	31,062	12,368	217
% distribution	100	10.4	18.5	50.6	20.1	0.4
35-55	30,274	7,932	8,301	11,574	2,356	111
% distribution	100	26.3	27.4	38.2	7.8	0.3
55+	18,395	8,862	5,340	3,618	541	34
% distribution	100	48.2	29.0	19.7	3.0	0.2
Total 15+	110,059	23,183	24,995	46,254	15,265	362
% distribution	100	21.1	22.7	42.0	13.8	0.4

	Indians	Total, Canadian-born
No schooling or grades 1-4 only	48,178	736,928
% of total population	43.8	7.8

Canadian-born Eskimos 15 years of age and over (includes some attending school)

	Number	%
Total	6,298	100.0
No schooling, grades 1-4	5,695	90.4

Population 15 and over not Canadian-born, 1961	Number
Total, no schooling and elementary 1-4 grades ..	297,223
Non-Canadian-born, British Isles origin	31,915
Non-Canadian-born, R. of France origin	8,665
Subtotal	40,580
(% without language handicap 13.7%)	
Estimated total with language handicap (less persons from countries other than France and the British Isles, who spoke French or English on arrival.)	256,643

Population 15 years and over, Canadian born and non-Canadian born, no schooling and 1-4 grades only, Census 1961

	Canadian-born	non-Canadian-born
(a) Total	9,471,082	2,575,243
(b) No schooling and 1-4 grades	736,928	256,643
% (b) of (a)	7.8	10.0
includes 9,366 attending school.		

Non-Canadian born by period of immigration, 15 years and over, no schooling and 1-4 grades only, Census 1961

	Number	%
Total	297,223	100.0
Before 1931	185,378	62.4
1931-1945	9,353	3.1
1946-1950	16,410	5.5
1951-1955	35,473	11.9
1956-1961	50,609	17.0

